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COUNTRY

Austria

SUBJECT

Recent Developments along the Austro-Czech
Border

PLACE
ACQUIRED

DATE OF
INFO.

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1. The Czechs have built barriers across the double-track Vienna-Prague railway line between the border stations of Semend (48°46'N, 15°59'E), Lower Austria, and Ceske-Velenice (48°46'N, 15°58'E), Czechoslovakia. The barriers, located approximately 10 meters beyond the Lainsitz River railroad bridge, consist of six reinforced concrete gates, three on either side of the roadbed, which close across the railroad tracks. The gates are opened by a crank. All passenger trains and some freight trains travelling in the direction Prague-to-Vienna must undergo an inspection before being permitted through the railway gates. No inspection is required for trains travelling in the direction Vienna-to-Prague.
 - a. As an additional precaution a derailment device has been fastened to each of the tracks. Inspection guards remove this device after a train has been cleared for passage.
 - b. Czech soldiers, armed with machine pistols, act as inspection guards at this check point. Shelters for the guards have been dug in the railroad embankment near each of the barriers.
2. Between 24 and 29 May a barbed wire fence about 2 meters high was erected by the Czechs in the so-called Schwarzes Moos, district of Finsternau (48°53'N, 14°59'E). The fence runs through a path in the woods, about 150 meters from the border in Czech territory and about 50 meters southeast of Kote 537.
3. Between 31 May and 2 June 1952 a barbed wire entanglement was put up on the southeast side of Koesslersdorf (48°54'N, 14°59'E), Czechoslovakia, across from Kote 483, district Schoenau bei Litschau (48°56'N, 15°02'E), Austria. The entanglement is 2 meters high, 350-400 meters long, 7 meters deep, and situated about 200-250 meters from the border.
4. On 2 June 1952 Czech soldiers brought a gun by truck to the bunker located in front of the Thaya River bridge at Hardegg (48°51'N, 15°52'E), Austria and installed the gun in the bunker.
5. On 13 June 1952 a barrier, 1.20 meters high and 7 meters long, was laid

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diagonally across the Klein-Schweinbarth-Nikolsburg highway 250 meters northeast of the Austrian border between border markers 9/66 and 9/67. A second road block, a tree entanglement, was observed on the Pottenhofen-Nikolsburg highway about 400 meters northeast of the Austrian border at border marker 9/68. This roadblock is about 1.20 meters high and 7-8 meters long. A ditch, dimensions unknown, runs behind these barriers cutting diagonally through the road where the two highways merge.

6. About the end of May 1952 Czech soldiers were posted in the bunkers along the Bernhardstal (48°42'N, 16°52'E)-Reintal (48°42'N, 16°49'E)-Katzelsdorf (48°42'N, 16°47'E)-Schrattenberg (48°44'N, 16°43'E)-Drasenhofen border region. The reasons for this measure are not known.
7. It is rumored that railroad traffic now routed through Hohenau (48°37'N, 16°54'E) will be rerouted through Marchegg (48°17'N, 16°55'E) in the near future at the demand of the Czechs. This arrangement would mean a considerable loss, in the form of transportation costs, for Austria. Czech railroad authorities have placed a 3,200 kilogram concrete block, mounted on rollers, on the stretch of railway between Bratislava and Marchegg, directly in front of the Austrian border, thus blocking this route.
8. On 24 June 1952 the Czech border guard unit in the Marchegg border area was replaced by a new unit. There are also mounted Czech gendarmes with dogs in this area.
9. Along the Austro-Czech border near Thaya a charged barbed wire entanglement has been erected and mine fields extended in order to put a stop to the many illegal border crossings in this region. A 50 meter strip of woods has been cleared along the border to allow a better view from the newly erected watch towers.
10. In the vicinity of Drosenhofen there has been considerable progress on the construction of an entanglement, 2 1/2 - 7 meters wide, which reaches from Heinrichsreith (48°52'N, 15°37'E) to the Thaya. The Czechs have also begun to build a wire entanglement on the border near Felling (48°52'N, 15°48'E), Bezirk Hollabrunn, Austria. A strip has been cleared where this entanglement runs through the woods. In various spots there are trip wires connected to mines and watchtowers have been erected about 300 meters from the Austrian border from which the barriers and border can be seen.
11. Several watchtowers were erected on the left bank of the Danube at Theben (48°11'N, 16°59'E), facing downstream; they can be seen from Austrian territory. In the same area during May 1952 a large searchlight was erected which lights up the water of the March River mouth and the Danube. This was evidently put up as a security precaution against Czech refugees who try regularly to swim to the Austrian bank of the March or Danube from that area. A watchtower 10 meters high has been put up recently on the Czech bank of the Danube north of Wolfsthal (48°08'N, 17°00'E), Lower Austria, presumably for the same reason.
12. In the vicinity of Engerau (48°07'N, 17°06'E), Austria, there have been extensive night maneuvers of the Czech Army recently. Rifle and machine-gun fire can sometimes be heard almost all night. It is dangerous to approach the border in the Engerau area, since the officers quartered in the Neuhoof are armed and have a tendency to shoot without warning.
13. Along the Czech border in the area from Karlstift (48°36'N, 14°45'E) to Bernhardsthal (48°42'N, 16°52'E), Austria, the Czechs have put up many roadblocks in the form of barbed wire entanglements and tranches, as well as high lookout posts and bunkers. Since 20 June 1952 small Czech military units have been engaged in re-conditioning the concrete bunkers which were built along the Czech bank of the March River before 1938.
14. Members of the Czech battalion stationed in Melacka (48°26'N, 17°02'E) have begun to renovate three bunkers located on the river bank across from

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Droesing, Austria, near Kote 147 (48°32'N, 16°57'E) in the Porec district of Czechoslovakia. The three bunkers lie about 80-100 meters from the Austrian border. Loopholes appear on the sides of adjacent bunkers, some aimed upstream and some downstream. Behind the bunkers are restricted zones I and II, which civilians may enter with the proper pass.

- a. The drone of compressed-air machines in this area may indicate either that pneumatic drills are being used to enlarge the bunkers, or that other construction work (Torkretierungsverfahren) is in progress.
- b. Workers were observed camouflaging one of the bunkers in this region, and dumping earth to even out the terrain where the bunker jutted forth.

- 15. In the tank factory (formerly a sugar factory) in Uhorska Ves (48°23'N, 16°51'E), Czechoslovakia, a watchtower has been placed on the highest part of the building. A company of Czech soldiers was billeted in the factory at the time the watchtower was erected.
- 16. In the lower March River basin there are very few sectors where one can approach the river at a dead angle without being seen. Guards quartered beneath the Arpad-Felsen have erected watchtowers on the Felsen and also further down toward the river, and can see far into Austrian territory without being observed.

- 1. ☐ Comment: Possibly Drosendorf (48°52'N, 15°37'E), Austria.
- 2. ☐ Comment: These work units have been heard conversing in Hungarian.
- 3. ☐ Comment: Cannot be located in available reference material.

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